

Dictation Contest (PRJr, 初級) No. 1032

Hey, guys! How are you doing?

Have you seen any cherry blossoms yet?

I think we could see some cherry blossoms around Tokyo last month, but most of the city's cherry blossoms trees, including the ones here in Kunitachi, bloomed much later than expected. I think many people were surprised, but now, most of Tokyo's sakura is finally starting to come out!

Do you have any favourite cherry blossoms viewing spots? Do you sometimes like to do hanami? Let me know, okay? See you next time!

Dictation Contest (PR 1 , 中級) No. 1032

Hello, everyone! Welcome back to PR1.

Today, we're going to talk about dolphins – intelligent marine mammals known for their playful nature and extraordinary abilities.

Dolphins have captivated humans for centuries, with their sleek bodies, acrobatics, and complex social structures. These highly intelligent creatures [possess] large brains relative to their body size, rivalling even some primate in some cognitive abilities. Dolphins also communicate through a sophisticated system of clicks, whistles, and body language, allowing them to navigate the vast ocean and [coordinate] hunts with remarkable precision. However, nowadays, dolphins are facing significant threats, including habitat loss, pollution, and entanglement in fishing gear. So, in order to ensure their continued survival, it is essential to protect these animals and... and the delicate ecosystem they inhabit.

That's all for today. See you next time!

Dictation Contest (PR2 上級) No. 1032

Hello, everyone! This is PR2.

Today's topic is about Methane emission of Tucururi dam. Are you ready? Let's begin!

Dams and reservoirs around the world are an underappreciated source of methane. Now start-ups want to capture that gas as a source of power.

It takes just one second for four Olympic-sized swimming pools-worth of water to charge through the turbines at the Tucuruí dam in northern Brazil. The rush of water here at one of the largest hydroelectric reservoirs in the Amazon region is deafening, but it's what makes the dam the fifth largest power plant in the world. As the water churns through a series of 25 turbines and spillways of the dam, however, something else is happening – it's emitting greenhouse gases. Often regarded as one of the oldest forms of renewable energy, hydroelectric dams and their reservoirs are responsible for the release of almost one billion tonnes of methane into the atmosphere as water approaches and then tumbles its way through the turbines that generate electricity. Methane is a greenhouse gas that's more than 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a 20-year lifespan, but it also breaks down faster in the atmosphere than CO₂. These hidden emissions mean that hydroelectricity is perhaps not as clean as it first seems. The reason is that it's not just water passing through the turbines – a lot of dissolved greenhouse gases [flow] through them too. Just as carbon dioxide dissolves in our fizzy water while under pressure, so too does methane gas dissolve in large bodies of water under certain conditions.

That's all for today. See you!